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February 25, 2013, Legislative Committee on Aging

Written Testimony submitted by

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On behalf of the membership of Conn-NAHRO

Conn-NAHRO is the Connecticut chapter of the National Association of Housing and Redevelopment Officials; its membership is comprised of Public Housing Authorities and other individuals and organizations involved in affordable housing.

**RAISED HOUSE BILL NO. 6398 AN ACT CONCERNING A SAFE HAVEN FROM
EVICTION FOR ELDERLY AND DISABLED TENANTS. (OPPOSE)**

Senator Ayala and Representative Serra and members of the Aging Committee:

My name is Jeffrey Arn, I am the Vice President of Housing and Legislation for Conn-NAHRO, I am the Executive Director of the Vernon Housing Authority and I also serve as a Commissioner for the Coventry Housing Authority. Although I appreciate the well intentioned goal of this bill I **am in opposition of RAISED HOUSE BILL NO. 6398 AN ACT CONCERNING A SAFE HAVEN FROM EVICTION FOR ELDERLY AND DISABLED TENANTS.**

This bill has given practitioners of Public Housing cause for great concern. HB 6398 will mandate that Housing Authorities provide unmerited and ill-timed information to elderly and disabled tenants when issuing a notice to quit. This bill will in effect render the eviction process for public housing unworkable and remove one of the few remaining tools available to preserve public housing for our deserving residents.

To encumber the notice to quit process for public housing authorities with this requirement is beyond reason. Public housing is a real estate enterprise in which the tenants are admitted based on their ability to abide by the rules and regulations. To somehow try to make the housing authority the actual caretaker for tenants who do not live up to the rental agreement goes beyond the landlord tenant relationship. This is one more incremental step in burdening public housing with responsibilities pertaining to social services, creates another unfunded mandate and brings public housing as it was intended closer to its demise.

If there are agencies with the capabilities to support our elderly and disabled residents, then they should reach out well before the notice to quit process and inform the residents of this availability. Public Housing Authorities can help facilitate this, but it should happen well before the notice to quit stage. This could be accomplished by posting information regarding these services in appropriate areas such as Leasing and Administrative Offices.

Finally, most public housing authorities go above and beyond our private counterparts in helping residents avoid eviction but we are again being singled out with this bill. A more reasonable and across the board solution to assist elderly and disabled tenants would be to post this information in all public and private leasing offices for all landlords. This would give the opportunity for people to get this information prior to the eviction process. Additionally, this information could be posted at each housing court location and you could require the court clerk to distribute this information to those in need. This would allow for all elderly and disabled people to receive the information once again if they are in the eviction process. This solution would assist all elderly and disabled Connecticut tenants and not just those residing in public housing. This is crucial because every time a public housing specific bill such as this is passed there is a perpetuation of stigmas regarding our public housing residents which are unwarranted and undeserved.

Therefore, I ask that you please do not move on this bill at this time. Perhaps a review of the reasons this bill was proposed and a more well-structured solution can be found in the future. On behalf of CONN-NAHRO we would be pleased to participate in a discussion of this issue with all involved.

I thank you for reading this testimony.